243 Because of the plethora of pests, and in an attempt to cope
782 with them, as soon as the fields are fertilized, the ritual Ngemali Umai ("Making the Farm Taboo") is observed. Offerings similar to those already described are made at the farm, and supplications to the antu chit, antu pipit ("spirits of the rat and sparrow") are made, beseeching them to accept the rice, cakes and eggs and take off to the sea, but leave the farms alone. Following the ritual, no one from the family is allowed to go to the farm for three days. The paths to the farm are marked with a leaf placed in the slot of a stick, to indicate that the farm is taboo, and anyone trespassing onto it is liable to a fine.

243 Except in the case of farms located "at the foot of the ladder"
349 (di kaki tangga'), every family has a langkau umai or farm hut where members can stay to guard the rice when it comes to fruit. The langkau is built of split bamboo flooring on bamboo supports, with roof and walls of woven nipa or sago leaves, having an overall size of about twelve square feet. There are no divisions in the langkau and the single door opens directly onto an uncovered porch which commands a view of the rice-field.

243 The decimation of the animal population that has accompanied the
224 clearing of forests in the District has reduced greatly the problem of losses due to wild pigs and deer, but occasionally such animals do small damage to the new rice and give a welcomed opportunity to mount a hunt-which almost always proves unsuccessful but provides an outing for the men and boys.